



FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet

73RD SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

The 73rd SOS, located at Cannon AFB, NM is one of 8 flying squadrons within the 27th Special Operations Wing. The squadron flies the AC-130W Stinger, one of the newest aircraft in the AFSOC inventory. The AC-130W is a multi-role aircraft capable of conducting close air support, air interdiction, armed reconnaissance, intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance, and high altitude personnel airdrop in direct support of unified and theater special operations commands.

In April 2009, the USSOCOM Commander directed the modification of the aircraft to include a precision strike package in order to support additional close air support missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.



(courtesy illustration)

Lineage

Organized as 73rd Aero Squadron on 26 Feb 1918. Demobilized on 4 Jul 1919. Reconstituted and consolidated (16 Oct 1936) with 73rd Headquarters Squadron which was constituted on 18 Oct 1927. Redesignated 73rd Pursuit Squadron on 8 May 1929. Activated on 15 Jul 1931. Redesignated 73rd Attack Squadron on 1 Mar 1935; 73rd Bombardment Squadron (Medium) on 17 Oct 1939. Disbanded on 1 Nov 1943. Reconstituted and consolidated (19 Oct 1985) with the 3rd Strategic Support Squadron, which was constituted on 26 Oct 1950. Activated on 16 Nov 1950. Inactivated on 15 Jun 1961. Redesignated 73rd Special Operations Squadron on 19 Sep 1985. Reactivated 1 October 2006.

Assignments

Unkn, 26 Feb-Nov 1918; 2nd Day Bombardment Group, Nov 1918-1919; unkn, 1919-4 Jul 1919. 17th Pursuit (later 17th Attack; 17th Bombardment) Group, 15 Jul 1931; 28th Composite Group, 3 May 1941; Second Air Force, 6 Oct-1 Nov 1943. Second Air Force, 15 Nov 1950; 4238th Strategic Wing, 1 Jul 1959-15 Jun 1961; 16th Special Operations Wing, 17 Oct 2006-15 November 2006. 1st Special Operations Wing, 16 November 2006-30 September 2007. 27th Special Operations Wing, 1 October 2007-

Stations

Waco, TX, 26 Feb 1918; Call Field, TX, 1 Mar 1918; Garden City, NY, 16 Jul-13 Aug 1918; St Maixent, France, c. 5 Sep 1918; Delouze, France, c. 20 Sep 1918; Colombey-les-Belles, France, c. 5 Oct 1918; Ourches, France, c. 15 Nov 1918-1919; Hazelhurst Field, NY, 19 Jun-4 Jul 1919. March Field, CA, 15 Jul 1931; McChord Field, WA, 26 Jun 1940-10 Mar 1941; Elmendorf Field, Alaska, 14 Mar 1941 (detachments operated from Ft Randall, Umnak, Adak,

and Amchitka, Alaska, 1942-1943); Umnak, Alaska, Apr 1943; Amchitka, Alaska, Jun-30 Aug 1943; Paine Field, WA, 14 Sep 1943; Pyote AAFld, TX, 6 Oct-1 Nov 1943. Hunter AFB, GA, 16 Nov 1950; Barksdale AFB, LA, 5 Jan 1953-15 Jun 1961; Hurlburt Field, FL, 17 Oct 2006-30 Sep 2007. Cannon AFB 1 Oct 2007-

Aircraft

Unkn, 1918-1919. P-12, 1931-1934; P-26, 1934-1935; P-12, 1935-1936; A-17, 1936-1940; B-18, 1939-1942; B-26, 1942-1943; B-25, 1942-1943. C-124, 1950-1961; AC-130W, 2006-.

Operations

Managed an airpark with Second Army, c. 15 Nov 1918-1919. Trained for pursuit and attack missions (1931-1939) and for bombardment missions (1939-1941). Reconnaissance in support of flood-relief in Southern California during Mar 1938. Combat in Northern Pacific, Dec 1941-Aug 1943. Flew airlift support for SAC bases in CONUS and overseas from 1950-1961. Combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan 2010-

Honors

Service Streamers

World War I Theater of Operations

Campaign Streamers

World War II: Aleutian Islands; Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

4 Apr 1956 - 31 Dec 1957

Emblem Significance: Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. A War Hawk is set against the night sky, with wings spread across the globe. The War Hawk is a fearsome predator, ready to strike unsuspecting prey at a moments notice (any time). Its majesty and grace is respected by all and feared by prey. The War Hawk's magnificent wings span the globe, signifying global reach (any place). The black background symbolizes the unit's primary mission, clandestine or covert, accomplished under the cover of night. The motto of the Air Force Special Operations Command is "Any Time...Any Place." The unit encompasses that and goes further "Without Fail."